

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 328.

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 1860.

PRICE 1½d.

## WHALES AND WHALEMEN.

Who were the first whalemén? Not the sea-ruling Briton—not the hardy Dane—not the steadily enduring, amphibious Dutchman—not the bold Norwegian, child of the Sea-kings. No. The Spaniard—Biscayans and Basques—first dared attack Leviathan on the high seas so early as 1575. True, some have tried to prove the Norwegians were first in the field, but they have not made out a clear case. It was probably the narwhal, grampus, and other small versions of the great whale they hunted. The old ninth-century navigator Ohthere, the Norwegian, whose wonderful adventures were taken down from his own lips by no less a man than our King Alfred, speaks of having slain sixty whales in two days. Flatly impossible, if right whales had been in question. Thus much is certain: the first whalebone which ever found its way into England was picked up from the wreck of a Biscayan ship in 1594; and when, at the close of the sixteenth century, the English first began to fit out whale-ships, they were obliged to call in Biscayans, both to direct them in their preparations, and to fill the more important offices in the ship. It was not long before we outstripped our teachers; pushed boldly up into the Ice-king's domain; discovered Spitzbergen (sharp mountains), and established there a fishery, to which other nations soon flocked. We remained pre-eminent, laying down the law as to where they should and should not fish, though, somehow or other, the Dutchman contrived to reap a far larger share of the profits than ourselves.

There are many species of whales; no one knows exactly how many. It is a perplexed chapter in natural history. Enough to make the naturalist tear his hair are the confused accounts Jack Tar brings home of 'sulphur bottom,' 'broad nose,' 'razor back,' 'tall spout,' and a host more, with delightfully unscientific descriptive names, whereby he learns to distinguish unprofitable whales, not worth the toils and perils of capture. That clever Yankee, Herman Melville, who instructs and befools his reader by turns, but who certainly knows something about whales and whaling, has whimsically classed the great family into three books—folio, octavo, and duodecimo. As a sample of the folio, we may take the sperm and the right or Greenland whales, the only two kinds hunted by man; of the octavo, the grampus and the narwhal (nose-whale), or unicorn whale. His horn, projecting straight ahead, ten or even fifteen feet, the Dutch—who seem to have had the christening of most things up in those regions—at first took for a grotesque long nose, in the style of King Croquinalay's nose, which his courtiers had to

wind up on a bobbin! Some say the narwhal uses this horn of his to pierce holes through the ice, when he comes up to blow or breathe; others, that he mows off sea-weed with it. No doubt, too, as he has a small mouth, and yet eats great fish, he has an Italian sort of knack of transfixing them with his stiletto, so that they may be devoured at leisure. Porpoises are the duodecimo edition of the whale. Two features of resemblance run through the whole family—a horizontal tail, and a spout. But observe, it is not *water* that is spouted; it is *breath*, dense vaporous breath, which when blown in one's face, feels like fog. To look at, it is more like a splendid whiff of tobacco-smoke, curling and waving as it ascends two or three yards high. Of course, when the creature 'blows' before quite reaching the surface, water too is forced up—hence the popular notion that water is *spouted*.

A thrilling cry is that when the man at the mast-head sings out, 'There she blows!' and the brave fellows, shouting, 'A dead whale or a stove boat!' rush to the chase as joyously as the scarlet-coated huntmen who are going to scour the pleasant fields and woods of Old England after wily little Reynard. The object of *their* sport is a creature six hundred times the bulk of a man. A flip of his tail can send boats and men whirling into the air. The fields they scour are the hungry waves, with toppling icebergs for hills. They play a game at hide-and-seek in the jaws of destruction.

The right or Greenland whale—who shall take precedence here, because he is the most anciently hunted of whales—is still the main object of pursuit by English whalemén. Brother Jonathan, with his usual 'cuteness, has chosen a field of less risk and more profit—sperm whaling—for the sperm whale has no taste for living among icebergs and polar bears; he likes to float in the tepid waters of the tropics. The right whale shuns these enervating regions. Only a straggler here and there is found in the waters that wash the spice islands and lands of palm; and the equator is to him, says Maury, as 'a wall of fire which he cannot pass.'

There is nothing in nature so wonderful that the human mind does not love to add a finishing-touch of its own, and make it yet a little more monstrous. Thus the size of the largest of moving things has been exaggerated. Great 'authorities' have gravely described it as two or three hundred feet long. The old writers got as far as nine hundred. The sober truth is sixty feet for the usual, and seventy for the extreme length attained by the right whale; and, seventy the usual, and ninety the extreme by the sperm whale. Razor-back, whose yield of oil is so poor, and himself so swift and difficult to capture, is

said to be a hundred feet long; but as there can have been few opportunities of taking his measure, that may probably be an exaggeration. With this great carcass, the eye is no larger than a colt's, and the ear imperceptible, while the lips are fifteen or twenty feet long. And, by the way, these small eyes are so far back, and have so high an intervening ridge of head between them, that their owner must see an entirely different prospect with each eye at the same moment. What a source of bewilderment for poor Leviathan! No wonder he is vacillating. Another peculiarity is, that he sees better under water than at the surface; and when pursued, is sometimes observed to keep for miles so true to one point of the compass, that one cannot but believe he is guided by landmarks in the great bed of the ocean; recognising as he swims along, here, a familiar hill, there, a cavern, or a long since foundered ship; as we, on a trackless moor, steer our course by a familiar spire, or hill-top, or distant tree.

His shape—but he has no shape. His waist is thirty or forty feet round; he tapers a little towards the tail, that terrible, half-moon shaped weapon of defence and screw-propeller. By its means he can dive or swim at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour; his usual pace, however, is about three or four. His coat is velvety black, spotted with gray; the belly and under-jaw white. He grows grayer with age, and has a scanty beard. The head is shaped somewhat like a shoemaker's last, and seems to contain more oil than brains; for the whale is a timid, stupid animal; so timid, that sometimes a bird alighting on his back will set him off in great agitation and terror. Scarcely ever do the dangers of attacking him result from any deliberate attempt at retaliation on his part, but simply from the blind and frantic expressions of agony when the sharp iron of the harpoon enters his flesh.

What is the use of his oil? It certainly was not given him solely for our benefit. Here is a colossal creature not meant to live at the bottom of the ocean, but needing to be often at the surface, and breathe the air. You would expect him to sink when not keeping himself up by some kind of swimming action; but far from this, the whale floats when motionless, and has to use exertion to go down, thanks to that vast reservoir of oil, the blubber. Bulky as he is, he is lighter than water till stripped of this. It is, then, to give facilities for air-breathing to a sea-monster, that nature has made an oil-barrel of him—a gigantic buoy!

The whalebone ought rather to be called *whale's teeth*. It is the apparatus which in some species prepares the food for the stomach, though as a sieve instead of a grinding-machine; for like the elephant, largest of land-animals, the whale fills his great stomach with rather light food. Swimming along with mouth wide open, the blades of whalebone inside that mouth, converging at top like the roof of a house, and thickly lined with hair—a sort of hairy Venetian blind—form an excellent trap for the small-fry of the ocean. Crabs, medusæ, shrimps, 'brit'—a kind of animalcule which colours the sea for miles together, and is the whale's favourite 'mess'—these the sieve keeps back, and lets the water, robbed of every nutritious particle, run out again.

The nostrils or blow-holes are on the crown of the head; and though he can remain an hour or more under water without breathing, it is possible for a whale to be drowned; indeed, it is not very unusual for

young whales to run downward when attacked, until they exhaust themselves so completely, that they are unable to return to the surface, but are suffocated in the water; so it is very clear they are not fish. They have other claims, besides a capacity for being drowned, to entitle them to the rank of mammals: they are warm-blooded, considerably more so than man, though the polar seas be their dwelling-place; and they suckle their young. The 'baby' is about fourteen feet long, and tenderly beloved by its huge mother, who will perform prodigies of valour in its defence, waking up even into a comparatively intelligent state under the strong stimulus of maternal love. The whalemén take cruel advantage of this trait, attacking the 'calf,' that they may get the mother, who will freely give her life rather than abandon it.

The whale has probably no enemy but man that can war to the death, but many that delight to tease. The shark now and then takes a bite out of his tail; the sword-fish is said to give him unpleasant thrusts; and the fulmars are fond of whetting their beaks upon his back. Of a peaceable disposition, the Greenland whale seldom falls out with his own kind; but the more lively sperm is said often to bear the ancient scars of fierce battle.

Why should a creature so powerful in itself, and inhabiting an element where man is at so great disadvantage, ever suffer itself to be captured? It seems to be partly through a want of sagacity in directing its strength, and partly, poor monster! through a guileless, unsuspecting disposition. Like birds on a desert island, who, at first sight of man, and while yet ignorant of his nature, shew no fear, so the inexperienced whale will suffer a boat to approach quite close, little dreaming those small creatures gesticulating in it can be such deadly foes. The feel of the harpoon in his back wakes him up to the terrible reality. His first act, nine times out of ten, is to rear his head, arch his body, and then plunge down beyond the reach of the enemy. Then, harpooners, beware, for if the line—one end of which is fastened to the harpoon, and the other coiled up in the boat—happen to run foul—if a rash hand be stretched out to right it, if a foot get entangled in the coil, hand or foot is severed from the limb quicker than thought. Once a poor fellow incautiously cast under his feet a little of the line he had hauled in as the whale came up. A stroke of his lance made the whale dart suddenly down again; the line began to run out, and in an instant caught him by a turn round his body. He had but time to cry out, 'Clear away the line!' when he was almost cut asunder, dragged overboard, and never again seen. And this kind of accident is very frequent. So great is the friction of the line, the harpooner is often enveloped in smoke; and if the wood, where it comes in contact, were not repeatedly wetted, the boat would take fire. If the whale outrun his tether of rope, and it be not instantly cut away, the boat is dragged bodily under water, the crew hastily leaping on to the ice, or into the sea.

Great is the excitement on shipboard when a flag hoisted on the 'fast boat'—that which has flung the harpoon—telegraphs the news, and calls urgently for aid and more 'line.' So prompt is the response, so eager the rush of sailors to man more boats, those who are below not pausing to put on their clothes, but carrying them in their hands—sometimes finding no leisure to put them on for an hour or two—that a landsman, who does not understand the signal, or

the urgency of the case, has ere now thought them all gone mad, or that the ship was sinking, and has begged to be taken into one of the boats.

It was not wise of Leviathan to plunge into the depths of the ocean, for he came up again terribly exhausted, as we may well believe, considering that when he gets, as he often does, to the depth of seven or eight hundred fathoms, there is a weight on his back of above two hundred thousand tons—a weight which exceeds that of sixty large ships of war, manned and provisioned for a six months' cruise. Whereabouts he will make his appearance, is of vital importance to his bold assailants; such a thing has happened as his coming up just under one of the boats, tossing it into the air, and scattering far and wide the crew. A bath in those icy seas, even when no worse befalls, is something more than bracing; when not picked up speedily, a man has had his hair frozen into a helmet of ice, and his clothes into a coat-of-mail. If the whale come up at some distance, all the boats pull hard, and ply him with lances, he lashing with his tail and fins the air, the water, and too often the frail cockle-shell boats, which are stove, and instantly fill. Once, during its struggles, a whale succeeded in shaking loose the harpoon; a smart sailor, pulling out his pocket-knife, leaped on the living whale's back, drew out the harpoon, and with the help of a comrade who had followed his daring example, struck it in afresh; the whale was in motion before they had finished and got off again. This is a story told by the brave, veracious Scoresby.

When the conflict is nearly over, the whale spouts blood instead of breath, dyeing the sea, the ice, the boats, nay, the men's clothes, with his blood; while from his wounds exude broad pellicles of oil, which spread over the surface of the water. One more convulsive effort. The boats draw back in fear. He flings his tail into the air, lashing it to and fro with a sound like the cracking of a thousand whips, which is heard for miles; beats the water with his fins; then turns on his side and dies, jeered out of life with three huzzas from his captors, and the waving of flags; and considering the dangers they have incurred, the skill, courage, and strength put forth, and the value of the prize, their exultation is not to be wondered at.

But neither toils nor perils are ended yet; the 'flensing' or flaying off the blubber has to be accomplished. The boats, five or six together, tow the prize alongside of the ship. Blue-jackets singing anything but dirges over the corpse. Putting spurs on their feet, to help them to a foothold on the slippery carcass, the harpooners now descend upon it, and peel off the blubber in strips, each perhaps a ton in weight, which are hoisted on board by machinery. If the sea be rough, the enterprise is both difficult and dangerous. With the sharp tools in their hand, a sudden jerk from a heavy sea makes them wound themselves or their companions; the waves drench, the ropes and hooks entangle them, and often a man falls into the whale's mouth, which has been exposed by a removal of the surface of blubber, and but for prompt assistance, would be drowned in it. There is still to chop the blubber in small pieces—a bit of sinew from the whale's own tail serving as chopping-block—to stow them into the casks, and to secure the whalebone—a greasy, dirty job to wind up their heroic achievements with. From first to last they have been at it, perhaps, forty-eight hours without rest; what must be the luxury of a clean shirt and a few hours' sleep! The 'kregg,' or carcass, is abandoned to the hungry fulmars and sharks which eagerly flock around, but are often balked of their feast by its abruptly sinking to the bottom.

To the dangers of the chase must be added those of an inhuman climate, ice-fogs, storms, and bitter winds, which sometimes make mere exposure fatal. Perhaps a 'fast fish' or harpooned whale will drag a boat thirty or forty miles, and contrary winds prevent the

ship from following. Benumbed with cold, fainting for food, death stares the crew in the face. Small hope is there of regaining the ship in the teeth of a heavy gale, which drives it ever further, or while a dense fog impenetrably shrouds the anxious seekers from one another. Too often have the entire crews of three or four boats thus perished, or hairbreadth 'scapes have followed the endurance of extremes it makes the heart stand still to read of. Five men were once sent, in a gale, to a floe, in order to fix ice-anchors—to moor the ship, in fact, to the floe. The warps broke. The ship received a dreadful blow from the ice, and was obliged to reach off to a distance of twenty miles from the poor men on the floe. That portion of the ice on which they stood broke by the action of the swell, and before they could step on to the main sheet of ice, the water rushed in and cut off all retreat. Their fragment soon drifted out into a heavy sea; almost every other wave washed over it. They were obliged to lie flat on their bellies, and cling to the edge of the ice with their hands. About midnight, their fragile island was dashed by the waves against another lump, and broke into three pieces, fortunately leaving them on the largest, and that was a yard or two square. When the swell subsided, they managed to stand upright, and move a little. Daylight came—the mist cleared off, but no ship was to be seen. Resisting a fatal drowsiness, they held on yet another hour or two, and were saved. From the ship's mast-head, the small black cluster floating hither and thither had been joyfully descried. All survived. Many a hardy mountaineer has perished from a night's exposure, mild indeed compared with this. Well-seasoned timber is that which has been tossed about amid the storms and ice of the polar seas. Of such stuff are our whalers made, and from them the crews of our Arctic exploring-ships recruited—men whose nerves have been steelled from childhood by the habitual confronting of death, and daily endurance of extreme toil and hardship.

Concerning the sperm whale, we must be brief, though much has been written in his praise. He is somewhat larger, has a hump on his back, a more shapely head, orthodox teeth, a coat lighter in colour, and a soft, furry substance between the skin and the blubber, which has never yet been scientifically examined. He feeds on what sailors call 'squid'—supposed to be a large species of cuttle-fish. He is of a lively, courageous disposition compared with our old friend the right whale, and sometimes even vindictive. Hence, it is said to require more caution and address in those attacking him; but for that matter, the right whale himself is by no means so sluggish or timid when found straying in warmer latitudes. We have mentioned the sperm whale's preference for a warm temperature; so fastidious is he on this point, that his presence affords a sure and delicate clue to the course of some of the great currents which traverse the ocean. If a certain route be sedulously avoided by him, be sure a cold current is at the bottom of his aversion; and if at some points he will ascend to an unusually high latitude, he has good reasons in the shape of a warm current. The head of the sperm whale is a great reservoir of spermaceti—a fluid, as long as warmth remains, which can be baled out in buckets; and when he grows old and dyspeptic, strange to tell, the precious substance called ambergris is formed in the depths of his stomach. Unlike the right whale, he may be hunted all the year round; so his pursuers can take it more leisurely; and instead of their having hastily to stow away the blubber in casks, it is 'reduced'—the oil extracted immediately in the *try-works* with which sperm whalers are provided; the oil is consequently of finer quality. It is the partial decay of the fibres of the blubber, the gases from which combine with the oil, that renders Greenland oil offensive.



American sperm whaling in the vast Pacific has, in a commercial point of view, far outgrown in importance our Greenland and Davis' Strait whaling. When New England was yet a colony, gray-headed men would point to the sea, saying: 'Those are the fields where our children will reap their harvests.' A fleet of above six hundred sail yearly employed in hunting the sperm whale, now realises the prediction.

### OMNIBUSES.

I COMPASSIONATE the gentleman, and even the lady, who has never ridden in or upon an omnibus. A man who has never sat upon the knife-board, has not completed his education; he has left a very great deal unseen, unheard, and unfelt; he has missed the sensations of looking involuntarily into first-floor windows, of picking up information of a more startling than reliable nature, and of testing the ability of the small of his back to resist the incessant attacks of a sharp-edged instrument. You are recommended always to live up to your privileges, and surely a 'bus is a privilege. The hypochondriacal author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, who was wont to cheer his drooping spirits by furtively listening to the 'chaff' of 'barges' upon the banks of classic Isis, would have revelled in the amenities of a London 'bus. It is essentially the people's conveyance, and therein you encounter the many-headed monster in all its multiform variety, from the dirty little boy who 'sniffs' unpleasantly, to the moustached don who stares unpleasantly. Nor is the spice of danger wanting. You are taking money to your banker's—you know you are, or you would never look so conscious, and that overdressed man upon your left knows it too, and will consider it a reflection upon his character as a man of talent if it arrive at its destination. Mark that amiable-looking youth upon your right, with loose coat-sleeves and hands neatly folded upon his knees—his digits are even now making researches into your pockets; and that pretty young lady seated opposite you, who timidly inquires at the very nick of time if she is 'near the Old Bailey,' is neither more nor less than an accomplice. Everybody is entitled to his opinion upon tragedy and comedy, and to me there is something irresistibly comic in an omnibusful of utter strangers. Face to face they sit, and their muscles are perfectly rigid; they nod forward, like an old dame dozing, at every jolt of the omnibus, and threaten each other with their noses; they stare vacantly at the brims of each other's hats or bonnets; their hands are crossed upon the handles of their sticks or umbrellas; and they speak never a word unless the gentleman at the top should still have sufficient confidence in the kindness of human nature left to ask the gentleman near the door to tell the conductor 'Fleet Street.' This simple request does not at first sight appear likely to call for any vast supply of the milk of human kindness; it is, however, not unfrequently the precursor of altercations, contumely, and heart-burnings, for the conductor, you will observe, is upon the topmost step, conversing with 'Old Gutta Percha,' as he politely calls the driver, in playful allusion to his water-proof overcoat. So the gentleman near the door, after a careful reconnaissance, takes good aim, and lunges at him with his umbrella: the sharp point hits him full and true, and down hops the discomfited 'cad' like a spiteful parrot from his perch. 'Hulloa! I say, sir, 'ductors 'as feelin's as well as other people. I ain't paid for to be knock'd about.'

'Gentleman wishes to get out at Fleet Street.'

'What if he does? There's no 'casion to knock anybody's ribs in, is there? People tugs away at yer clo's as if they didn't cost anythink, and raps yer knuckles as if they was door-andles, and digs 'brellas into yer as if yer was a targit, and then complains on yer for not bein' civ'l,' says the conductor; and the gentleman near the door scowls at the gentleman at the top, and then significantly at the 'call,' which not one person in a hundred ever thinks of using, and that model of propriety is sure to find that it won't act. I congratulate myself upon having traversed every kind of limb-distorting, teeth-loosening, eye-starting road in every kind of 'bus, at every possible price from one shilling and sixpence to a penny, and I have generally been rewarded. My experience is, that the fun is in an inverse ratio to the fare. The eighteen-penny ones affect an air of respectability, in accordance with the charge; but the penny ones—now, I fear, discontinued—used to sacrifice everything to humour. 'Here you are, mum,' shouted the conductor of one of them to an aristocratic-looking old lady near the Marble Arch; 'a dozen on yer for a shillin'; you'd better 'ave a penn'orth to 'Atton Garden.' It was very rude, I fear; but the poor man had never been to college, or learned those ingenuous arts which soften the savage manners; at anyrate, he made me laugh, which is more than a great many learned men can do. Indeed, upon the whole, I think that, considering their opportunities, conductors behave better towards ladies than—pray forgive me!—ladies towards conductors. A lady-passenger from Notting Hill once had the conscience to ask a conductor in my hearing whether he would wait a few minutes at Regent Circus, whilst she went to Cramer and Beale's, and pronounced him a very disobliging creature for refusing to listen to so profitable a suggestion; and I rode with another lady from Highgate Hill to the New Road, where the lady, after trying the patience of the conductor, by declining to alight until she had taken an oath of him that the horses wouldn't 'go on' whilst she was on the step, 'if she'd only make 'aste about it,' pulled out an elegant but intricate purse, and after some very clever jugglery produced a perfectly unexceptionable sovereign. The poor man groaned aloud. 'Come, I say, mum,' said he, 'this 'ere's a little too bad; if you'd a told me on the road, I might a got change; but they don't know me at the public 'ouses 'ere, and I daresay they don't know you: you ought to a know'd better, you did indeed, mum.' However, he did get change, and I couldn't help sympathising with him in his comminational soliloquy upon 'them 'umbuggin' females.' But the abomination of conductors is the elderly female who always carries a market-basket. She never has more money than she requires for her fare, and the coin is always emaciated and ill-treated; inasmuch that one day I heard a man, after turning over and over in his hand, and biting again and again, a very suspicious-looking sixpence which had been tendered him by her, remark with the blandest of sneers: 'I s'pose you keep a lot o' these sort o' sixpences at 'ome, o' puppus for 'bus-conductors, don't yer, missus?'

The etiquette of omnibuses combines instruction with amusement. You there see man in his primitive state, not of nudity, of course, but of incivility; and you may form a notion, from the behaviour of the passengers, of the probable manners in the days of acorns. Nobody, you will observe, dreams of voluntarily making room for a new-comer. As soon as he has been shoved in head-foremost, and the door has been slammed to prevent his tumbling out backwards, he says, after a careful scrutiny of the numbers on each side: 'This side, I think;' then fixing his eyes steadfastly upon the roof of the vehicle, he drops himself heavily down. The two victims of this proceeding—for he is careful to aim at a slight aperture between two—under the influence of unwonted pressure upon the femoral part

of one leg, move sulkily right and left, whilst the human wedge which is acting upon them wriggles himself from side to side, with the general remark: 'Fourteen inches each person, I believe;' a proposition which nobody confirms or controverts, though it is evident that he has aroused the lively hatred of his immediate neighbours. The sanguine man who expects civility in an omnibus, would look for propriety in a shipwreck. I once attempted a little politeness in an omnibus, and learned a very useful lesson. The omnibus I entered was unusually narrow, and an old gentleman who sat next to the door was unusually prodigal of feet; the consequence was that I trod upon his toe. I made the most profuse apologies, and pleaded the extraordinary narrowness of the conveyance. As soon as I had finished, the old gentleman assumed an argumentative air, and rejoined: 'Yes, sir, very true, sir, but that doesn't justify you, I believe, sir, in treading upon my corn.' Of course, I couldn't say that it did, and I was therefore obliged to tell him that I had made all the apology of which I was capable, and had no more to say; upon which he grew abusive, and I angry, and I determined to do for the future as the people who trod on my corns did—that is, take no earthly notice of it; and I find it answers admirably. A man sometimes swears a little, but always confidentially to himself; he will look at you, certainly, in a manner which would make you think your life in danger if you saw it, but as your eyes are fixed upon the portrait of a sensual-looking man at the top of the omnibus, who is represented by the deceitful artist as liking, contrary to experience, the South African sherry which he is drinking, why, you don't, and he might therefore spare himself the effort.

If you are fond of asphyxia, you should ride inside an omnibus on a sultry summer day; a bouquet of fusty straw will contribute much to your gratification, and you may faint away amidst appropriate sights and sounds. Your *vis-à-vis*, good easy man, regales himself with fruit, the stones of which he propels from his mouth through the window close to your head; yonder, a stout lady, who is 'so 'ot she can't 'ardly abear herself,' supports the cause of open windows against the thin lady, who bodes 'a stiff neck;' and at your side is a beef-faced man, who takes off his hat and mops his face, and 'hopes you can manage to keep yourself warm.'

In the autumn, if you are lucky, you may fall in with the antediluvian old dame who recollects Noah in his infancy, and who lives in those prolific suburbs which are Eldorado to the perambulator-mongers. She travels in what she calls 'the coach' only twice a year, when she goes to receive her dividends. 'She has never been in a railway-train,' she informs you, 'though she lives close to the line. She can see the engine from her window, and she never hears its shriek without a shudder. She wouldn't trust herself to be dragged along by one of those awful things, whatever; and the huge red lamps she watches at night put her in mind of the Evil One.' There's little fear of her crinoline getting in anybody's way; she hardly seems to have anything to sit down with. Observe how she pays her fare before she mounts the step, and extorts from the conductor a solemn promise to set her down 'at the Duke of Wellington's statue, opposite the Royal Exchange.' Somebody, in whom she confides, has taught her that phrase, and she repeats it now and then, as if she were conning a lesson; nor does she fail to shrill it out at every successive stoppage, notwithstanding the conductor's frequent remonstrance: 'Lor' bless you, mum, why, you ain't within miles on it yet.' At last she arrives at her destination, where she is met by a benevolent-looking old gentleman, about gray enough to be her grandson, who tenderly guides her to the Rotunda, and you can't help looking out after the old body, and wishing her safe back to her ark in the suburbs.

With all my diligent attention to the forms and

customs of omnibuses, I have never been able to make my entrance and exit quite to the mind of the conductor. Entrance is my better movement, but my exit is far from perfect. Sometimes I stop until the omnibus is quite motionless before I attempt to descend, and then I am requested 'not to be all day.' Sometimes I dash out, and let myself down with a scientific drop, back foremost, and then, instead of a compliment, I am greeted with: 'You'll break your leg one o' these fine days, and expect me to pay the doctor's bill.' For the future, I think I shall wait till I'm pulled out.

By riding outside, and conversing with the driver, you will gain some idea of the multitude of stage-coaches which must have run formerly, for you will not meet a single driver who has not 'druv a coach,' and, generally, the Brighton coach, though why that should be the favourite (fabulous) vehicle, I do not know, unless it may be supposed to derive lustre from the fact, that it was once 'tooled' by a notorious baronet. Drivers are generally very good Christians—in their sentiments, at least—and shew every inclination to abstain from driving, at anyrate, their masters' omnibuses, on Sunday, if they could; but a circumstance occurred which led me to suppose that they are a little deficient in Scripture history. We had been going at a round trot through one of the streets which lead into the New Road, and were on the point of crossing, when a brougham dashed past our horses' heads, and it was only by dexterously jerking his cattle on to their haunches that our driver avoided a collision. 'Sarved that feller right,' said he, 'if I'd put the pole in his panel.'

'He certainly drives like Jehu,' said I, evasively.

'Who might he be, sir?'

'Oh, you must have heard of Jehu, who drove furiously.'

'Never till this moment, sir. What road did he drive, pray? Nowheres along *this* road, I know, or I should a'erd on 'im.'

'No, certainly not—a long way from here.'

'Ah, that 'counts for it, then; for I've druv this same road ten year come Michaelmas.'

Drivers are often cantankerous, and conceive a dislike towards persons who avail themselves of the train to a certain point, and then proceed by omnibus; and to this fact an unconscious passenger is often indebted for the palpitating state in which he gains the 'bus. 'Gent. come by rail, didn't he, Jim?' says the driver to his 'mate.' 'Let's give him a bit of a run, then;' and Jim makes-believe that he does not see the frantic waving of the umbrella, or hear the eager shout. Passengers, moreover, are, I daresay, blissfully ignorant of the criticisms to which they are subjected by the driver. 'That's a good load for threepence,' he remarks of a corpulent old gentleman; 'takes five minutes gettin' in, and five minutes gettin' out, and room for two when he's in there: the law's agin us, or I'd refuse to take 'im.' They have a particular aversion for what they call 'swells.' I heard a driver make the following pretty speech about a fashionable individual who was indulging in that amusement denominated 'fly-catching.' 'That 'ere swell a goin', Bill? Keep a eye on 'im when he gets inside, or e'll be a swallerin' somebody.' Nor are the fair sex passed over in silence. 'Here you are, miss,' said a fatherly old driver, 'all right for Pimlico. That is a nice gal,' turning to the 'outsiders.' 'I don't mind waitin' a little for 'er: plenty o' bonnet on 'er 'ed, too. I can't abear to see 'em with their bonnets all down their backs: if one o' my gals done it, I'd slap 'er face; that I would.' Now, a severe old lady insists upon his stopping immediately. 'Old 'ard! I am a 'oldin' as 'ard as I can. Some o' them old ladies seem to think you can pull up a pair o' 'osses in a nutshell, and that they ain't got no mouths, nor no withers, nor nothin'.'

Cabs are more respectable than 'buses, I daresay;

but they are more expensive, and less amusing, and, what is more, no omnibuses are used for conveying patients to the small-pox and fever hospitals. *Verb. ap.*

### THE STORY OF A LOOKING-GLASS.

TO-DAY, as I was turning over the papers in an old desk, to find a copy of my prize poem (subject, *Pugna apud Talabricam nuper commissa*) wherewith to gratify the eyes of Alfred, my eldest, who is at home for the holidays, the first thing which I beheld was the newspaper containing the account of Tom Arklow's death. 'The Battle of Talavera' was forgotten in a moment. My first emotion was a sharp and bitter pang of regret for the loss of the truest-hearted friend in the world; the second feeling, an indefinite idea that I was now released from a strange obligation. Putting my hands over my face, and resting my elbows on the faded green baize of the desk, I sat quite silent for several minutes. The thoughts which had hovered about in my brain collected themselves, and took shape and substance. Suddenly the whole truth flashed upon me in a connected form, and I remembered that I had solemnly promised to keep the following queer story a profound secret, till the chief actor in it, poor Tom himself, should have been twenty years in the grave. As the newspaper bore date, January 31, 1840, I am now at liberty to set on record the Story of a Looking-glass.

If I use the first person instead of the third, it will seem more like Tom speaking, and it makes me feel young again to recall his voice.

'I do not know'—this was generally how he used to begin.—'I do not know why I accepted Eustace Graydon's invitation to spend the "Long" with him, for he was not in our set, you know, Charley; but, at all events, accept it I did; and one glorious morning at the beginning of July, I found myself driving up the broad road between the larches which leads to Laulden Friars. Graydon's family were people who had risen from prosperous bankers in the county town to prosperous squires on the county sessions bench; clever, worldly, practical people, with a good chance of a baronetcy in the next generation, and not a scrap of romance in their composition. Eustace Graydon of St Caradoc's was the only son grown up; Philip, his brother, was a mere child. His womankind, as he called them, consisted of five sisters, for "they were seven" at Laulden Friars.

'I enjoyed myself exceedingly during the early part of my visit. The house was a thoroughly pleasant one to stay at. The horses were good; the dinners neither too sparing nor too sumptuous; the library and the trout-stream both well stocked. Sketching-parties, and rides to see the neighbouring lions, enlivened the fine days. Scott's novels, and the *Edinburgh Review* (then just fresh); the brilliant talk of some of the most rising Whig M.P.s; and last, not least, certain never-to-be-forgotten games of chess with pretty Geraldine Graydon, made rainy days yet pleasanter. So weeks passed on, till one day I noticed an unusual expression of vexation on the forehead of my handsome hostess. There were whisperings, too, amongst the girls, and an unwonted bustle amongst the servants, which indicated something astir. I asked Eustace Graydon, as we stood at the window after breakfast, for an explanation of the mystery. "I am glad you asked," he said, "for I really don't know how I should have had courage to broach the subject with becoming seriousness. We all want to ask you to do us a favour, and not one of us can summon up courage to do it. But as you have asked me yourself, I must needs be spokesman. My father has a letter saying that Sir George Blank, the attorney-general, and his lady, will be here to-day, on their way to town; and Sir George Blank wants to

settle what part my father is to play in the grand national drama to be brought out at St Stephen's next session. It so happens, also, that old Killpack and his four daughters are coming to spend their annual fortnight to-morrow; and as the masons and bricklayers render the wing uninhabitable, we are in distress for room; and unless you will kindly and graciously condescend to sleep in Hester's Room—I mean in the room over the library—we shall be puzzled how to provide for their accommodation."

'I laughed at such a slight cause occasioning an instant's embarrassment, professed my perfect and entire readiness to sleep anywhere, and quoted a line from *She Stoops to Conquer* about the charms of "three chairs and a bolster."

'Eustace thanked me, and went away to relieve his mother of her household cares. We went out fishing in the morning, and on our return found the new guests arrived. The dinner that day was the least lively I had yet sat down to at Laulden Friars. The great gun, as happens often with great guns in Pulpit, House, and Bar, hung fire rather than otherwise. He was an ugly man, who talked blue-book in a raucous voice; besides which, he engaged the attention of Geraldine the whole evening, and disgusted me amazingly. I felt convinced the destinies of our country were imperiled by his share in their direction. The rest of the party—old Killpack, his wife, and the rector of the parish, sociable, simple, Tory folk—were clearly bored beyond all utterance by the self-invited guest; and the whole evening was such a contrast to the former ones, that I could scarcely believe it was passed in the same place.

'At last it was time to retire, and I withdrew to my new sleeping-apartment. Eustace came with me, to shew me my way; stayed a few minutes, grumbling at the stupidity of the new-comers; and then wished me good-night. I sat for a few minutes before the fire, seeing all kinds of whimsical shapes and figures in its glowing caverns, and then began slowly to undress. I took off my coat, and put on my dressing-gown; but though tired when in the drawing-room, I now felt no inclination to sleep, and was suddenly seized with a desire to finish a volume of *Old Mortality* which I had commenced. The book was, I knew, on the library table, and I resolved to go down stairs quietly and get it. Half an hour's reading in bed had become a habit with me. I put on my coat again, and opened my chamber-door. The house was so still, that I hesitated, and thought I would turn back, lest the country guests should get frightened if they heard footsteps creeping stealthily along the corridors. The temptation to know how the skirmish at Drumclog terminated, however, was too strong to be resisted, and I set out. As is usual on such occasions, the stairs seemed to prate of my whereabouts; every board on which I trod creaked, and every door-handle jarred which I turned. I reached the library, however, which was just underneath; secured my prize, closed the door, and set off on my homeward journey. Though I had been shewn the way so recently by Eustace, I contrived to miss it; and to my great surprise, as I laid my hand on the door of the room which I considered my own, I heard voices. In a moment I perceived my mistake—I had turned down the wrong passage, and was on the eve of entering the butler's room. Congratulating myself on having been saved from a clumsy blunder, I turned away, but not before a sentence or two of the conversation going on in the room caught my ear. The words were common enough, and might bear fifty constructions—"I hope he will not see it." Just in that vacant state of mind in which we catch at everything, I immediately fancied that the words referred to me. Thrusting aside the idea as silly, I went back, locked my door, stirred the fire, and began to examine the objects round me. The room itself was of a curious, old-fashioned shape, though the furniture, like that in the



rest of the house, was modern. There were two divisions and two fireplaces in the apartment, and a space where one would have expected folding-doors. In the larger of the two divisions, raised a step higher than the other, stood the bed and all the appliances of a comfortable chamber. In the lower and smaller division there was a bath, a toilet-table, and on that table, a looking-glass. I have said the appointments of the room were modern; but I must make an exception in regard to this glass, as the carved-work and shape of it were both of a date at least twenty years anterior to everything else.

'I was in capital health, and am—as you know, Charley—the last man in the world to be morbid or fanciful, but yet I was conscious to myself of a feeling of indefinite dread, the like of which I never experienced before, and the like of which, thank Heaven, I have never experienced since.

'I undressed slowly, and got into bed, but just then recollected my novel, which the mysterious sensation evoked by the examination of my sleeping-apartment had quite driven out of my head. I got out of bed, and took the book off a chair on which I had laid it. Just as I was returning, it occurred to me that I should require a table to put my candlestick on. I looked round for one which could be moved without noise. The most suitable seemed a light rosewood one in the second division of the room. To get it, I must needs pass the table on which stood the antique looking-glass. I mention the circumstance, because I was conscious to myself of feeling that passing this was for some inexplicable reason an objection; nevertheless, I went to the little table, and removed some small books and a flower-vase which stood on it, placing them on the larger table, whereupon stood the glass. I had placed my candlestick on this table as well. The first time I faced the looking-glass, a white object appeared in it. I had my dressing-gown on, which was of a dark colour, so the reflection could not be of my own figure. Though, as I said before, utterly and entirely exempt from any traces of superstition, I still was at that moment—to use a word which I have often ridiculed—*nervous*. It cost an effort to look again in the glass; I summoned up courage, however, to meet it boldly; and never shall I forget the face that looked into mine.

'There was no image of my own features, not even the faint reflex of them which one sees in looking into a window. An entirely strange face appeared right before me, looking into me and through me with eyes instinct with a terrible fascination. It was a female face, belonging apparently to a beautiful girl just developing into the ripe perfection of womanhood. The complexion was a bright white; the shape not perfectly oval, for the forehead was very square, and the mouth small and open, so as to shew teeth not too regular, but very white. The eyebrows were arched and dark; the hair of that pale gold which we see in Raphael's earlier Madonnas. So much I seemed to have remembered afterwards about the face; but at the time I looked at it I thought of nothing but the eyes, so beautiful, and yet strained into an expression of the most intense horror; so bewitching, and yet dilated and bursting with agony, as though ready to start from their red sockets. Of the rest of the figure visible in the glass, I remember little. There was a very graceful neck, and a necklace of flashing emeralds. But ere my first speechless fit of terror at the sight had subsided, a sound enhanced it, for I seemed to see the lips move, and to hear a whispered tone, frozen with terror, murmur the word, "*Dead!*"

'The breath that spoke the word then clouded the surface of the glass with a bluish film, and the face was gone!

'How the rest of that night passed, I cannot tell. I stood for some time looking at the glass, then exerted a strong effort, and rushed out of the room.

'I awoke next morning lying on a couch, on which

I had sunk down exhausted. Being very fortunately an early riser, habit woke me, even after that night, at seven. Though I dared not glance into the room where the looking-glass stood, I contrived to dress myself and to appear at the breakfast-party at nine without traces of my disturbed night.

'The day passed off as the old days had passed; we were relieved, soon after breakfast, of the presence of the incubus and his lady; and things went on as they had done before the official visit. I rode, fished, talked, played chess, just as formerly. But all the time I was looking forward to the night with feelings of dread scarcely to be imagined, and fancying the hours moved with an incredible swiftness. In the evening, the family were all in the drawing-room, and the conversation turned on the book we had in reading, *Old Mortality*, and thence passed, naturally enough, to the subject of the author of Waverley's most striking characteristics, and specially to his evident belief in supernatural appearances. Nothing new was said upon the subject by any of the party: Mr Graydon took the incredulous line, and talked about dyspepsia; Mrs Graydon had the same view, and yet confessed to a weakness in favour of one ghost who had appeared to an uncle of hers. The rector was silent until appealed to, and then professed himself unable to get over Colonel Gardiner and Dr Donne. Old Killpack went to sleep soon after the subject began; but the young ladies, though they had observed throughout the dialogue a discreet silence, were careful to go out of the room together after wishing us good-night. Eustace joined in the conversation now and then in a careless way, but expressed no positive opinion. As for me, I took up a book, and professed myself too absorbed in it to speak, while, alas! all the while I was listening to every common-place sentence with straining ears, and showering blessings on every speaker whose remarks occupied any time, for my dread of the night increased with every minute the clock ticked away. At last the butler entered with the large prayer-book. We knelt down while the rector read prayers, and then wished each other good-night. The family retired. After a quarter of an hour of sheer agony, I nerved myself to seek my chamber. Just as I was leaving the room, Eustace entered.

"Alone," he said; and his voice had quite lost the languid drawl that he generally adopted—"alone, Arklow; that is just what I wanted. Sit down here. The servants are gone, and we shall be uninterrupted. I must talk very earnestly; but before I ask you the question which I am about to put, let me implore you to speak as if I was an entire stranger, and tell me the whole truth, thinking nothing about sparing the feelings of others, and exciting scandal. Since you came down this morning, I have watched you with the closest observation, and I have seen enough to convince me that you never passed a day wherein the interchange of common civilities was more painful, and yet (contradiction, as it seems) never found hours go on so perversely quick. The expression of your countenance this evening whilst they talked about the apparitions of the unseen world, assured me I have not been wrong. You saw something last night in that room over the library?"

'Thus addressed, it was impossible to refuse to explain. I narrated as briefly as I was able the fact which you have heard. When I had finished, he rose, left the room for ten minutes, returned, sat awhile silent, then spoke: "You have told me exactly what I expected to hear. It is due to you now to tell all the additional particulars with which I am acquainted. Before my father bought this place, it was the property of a family called Vandeleur. They were Roman Catholics, and traced their pedigree, without a flaw, to the reign of the third Richard. Sir Philip, the last baronet, left one daughter, Hester. She was, report says, 'beautiful exceedingly;' and as

the heiress of the largest estates in the county, had many suitors. Amongst them were two brothers, by name Frank and Herbert Wavewood. Hester loved Herbert, the younger and handsomer. I believe she was as sarcastic as she was lovely, and that at some ball she made Frank's plain face and stooping gait the subject of her wit. Sensitive and morbidly jealous, he resolved on humbling the woman who had despised him, and gifted his brother with the prize he himself so coveted. But in order to carry out his plan, he dissembled. Not affecting to conceal his own passion, he assumed a manly, generous tone, saying that one far worthier than he had won the heiress's hand, and that he must now be her father, and not her husband. The wedding-day came. Herbert and Hester were married. In those times, wedding-tours were not considered necessary, and a magnificent banquet and ball were to celebrate the event. The guests were beginning to assemble, and the bride was in her room with her bridesmaids and waiting-women. She was dressed, and seated at her toilet-table. Suddenly a servant rushed into the room, breathless, and flung herself at Hester's feet. Her message was told with frantic incoherence, but the main points of it were too clear. Mr Herbert had gone out with Mr Frank for a ride, to wile away the hours between the morning's rites and the evening's revel. They had tried the speed of each other's horses in a race up Windrush Hill—that tall sea-fronting cliff some three miles off westwards—Mr Herbert's horse, it was supposed, had been frightened by some object in the way, had plunged forward, and the rider was dashed to pieces. How Hester looked as she heard the story, I need not tell you, nor, perhaps, that she uttered only the one word, 'Dead!' and fell down before the glass, a corpse!"

"And Frank?" I exclaimed.

"He died some years afterwards, but left a confession with the clergyman who attended him in his last moments, to the effect that he had induced Herbert, when excited by wine, to mount an unbroken horse, and had even struck the beast with his riding-whip, to urge him to take the plunge which hurled his brother out of the world."

"And the room?"

"Will never be occupied again. To-night—at least the small part of it which is left us—we will spend together in my 'den.' It will remind us of the week before we went in for 'degree.' I have ordered lights, coffee, and cigars."

"With all my heart; of course, sleep is out of the question. But you will not put any one again to pass the night there: to a woman or invalid, the fright might be fatal."

"To-morrow, the workmen who are building the new rooms in the wing, pull down the library and the chamber over it; and half an hour ago—directly, in fact, that I heard the story of your experience—I went up stairs and broke the looking-glass."

#### HOW LONG IS THIS FOLLY TO LAST?

A *TRADESMAN'S* circular, sent to our wife, announces to her the important fact, that his 'assistants' have now 'overcome the difficulty with the Puffed Crinoline Petticoat.' They 'can make it now to perfection,' and, to substantiate the fact, there is annexed something meant for a female figure, but much more resembling one of those melancholy jokes bought in toy-shops, consisting of a small bust and head fixed in a ball to roll about upon. One of the specific articles recommended to notice is 'the Watch-spring Skeleton Petticoat,' of which some examples have 130 yards of steel, and yet are 'very light for summer wear.' Another is 'the New Gored French Petticoat,' the amplitude of which is left to our alarmed imagination. As a very appropriate corollary to all this, our petticoat-man—sad to think that it is a *man*!—informs his lady-friends

of his having enlarged his premises, so that 'the very great inconvenience' they have hitherto experienced in attending his shop will be felt no longer. We wonder if he has observed any proportion here, and how, in enlarging his space, he squared so many circles. A petticoat-shop, of any custom, to bear right relation to what women are now as compared with what they were formerly, and ought to be, would require to be something like a town-hall.

A silly, pretty woman, whom fortune has made Empress of France, finds no occupation that suits her faculties and feelings in that high position, but to tremble for her husband's life, and shape new dresses. It pleases her fancy to appear as if there were something frightfully wrong with her about the knees, and presently all the ladies of Europe feel bound to appear so likewise. The nearly universal disgust of the other sex is of no effect in checking the monstrosity. All moral considerations about the waste of material which these puff-dresses occasion, are thrown aside. Husbands and fathers are impoverished by the consequent bills, and serious family dispeace arises from this cause, where all would otherwise be happiness and union. All is in vain. As well preach to an advancing tide, or a house a-fire. The creatures are apparently helpless. It is a destiny they cannot resist. Even serious, quiet sort of women, at mature age, have to give in to the fashion to a certain extent, making a sort of compromise between their sense of what is proper and truly elegant, and their common subjection to the mysterious doom of assimilation which rules their sex. It is enough to make one wish for the Red Republic back in France, to put an end to—not the standing European Terror, the Emperor, but the mosquito-plague of petty annoyance which flows north, south, east, and west from the teeming lower extremities of the Empress!

It is a dismal thought that some of the most serious disquietudes which beset our life take their rise in causes unutterably trivial; in the passing, perhaps, of one uncivil word—in a piqued perseverance in some little habit for which we have been reproved—in the pursuit of something of no serious moment to us, but on which we have set our hearts, or to which we have unguardedly committed ourselves against unpalatable advice. The dresses of the female part of creation take their place among the trifles which create serious and wide-spread evils. What the women of the more affluent classes indulge in to the embarrassment of their husbands, and often with the ultimate effect of causing themselves and their families to be left with but poor provision or none at all, the poorer class of women strain to obtain in some extent, content with bad quality if they only can get show, and sacrificing for mere gewgaws the means of purchasing things decent and suitable to their station. To see, as one every day sees, a bee-like cluster of young women of the middle and humbler classes before the glazed front of some flashy haberdasher, gazing at bonnets, and cloaks, and laced frills, which they would fain buy—their minds sometimes wandering away into thoughts as to means for doing so—is a spectacle only to be exceeded in sadness by that you obtain when you glance in, and observe how many *men* are content to spend their lives in trying to make our wives and daughters buy more of these fripperies and vanities than it is moral for them to expect us to pay for. Moore has a poem in which he symbolises legitimacy as a blue-bottle fly on an altar, to which such animals as the goodly ox are continually coming up to be sacrificed. The same contrast we see between the trash of the mercer, and the solid and worthy things every day sacrificed to it—a right home-economy, good taste, family peace, often honour and virtue. To gain their ends with the humbler sort of women, some of this class of tradesmen call into force what is called the tally or club-ticket system, enabling them to get at present what their



hearts are set upon, to be paid up afterwards by instalments—a system, we understand, pregnant with ruin to these weak and inconsiderate creatures. What an oblation to lay on such an altar! We hear of restrictions being required for public-houses, on account of the immoralities they lead to; but the mercers' shops, the taverns of women, escape notice. We, for our part, believe them, with their extensive showy fronts, acres of floorage, and armies of tricked-out young men, to be more worthy of the lash of a Juvenal than the worst class of public-houses that exist. The enormity to which, in some instances, they have spread of late years, is but an exponent of passions and follies that militate against the fairest efforts of those who would reform and improve their species.

One of the clamours of our age is for the recognition of some higher political or legal position to women, as if they were now fitted for things of which they formerly were deemed unworthy. Take the common demonstrations of this fitness—a slavish following of fashions condemned by good taste and decency; a total inability of a single individual, or any group of individuals, to break through the bondage imposed by what takes the form of custom; a perpetual sacrifice of the good and worthy, of means for good, and of the sacred grounds of self-respect, for the most contemptible vanities. It would take two *English-women's Magazines* to fix this rightly, as we apprehend it.

### THE BATEMAN HOUSEHOLD, AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.—THE VAMPIRE COLLAPSES.

BEFORE Mr Onslow Bateman finally left Rudealeigh for London, the double marriage took place at the manor. It was with a heavy heart that the otherwise happy Florence saw her sister given to wayward Robert Marsden until death should them part; but Ellen did not share her misgivings. If a hundred little loving acts of hers escaped her lover's notice daily, she was content to set it down to anything but coldness or inattention. Faults she did not believe that he possessed, and his weaknesses she could make allowances for, and pardon. That he loved—or had loved within a month or so—another woman, was, of course, unknown to her; and if such a fact is indeed an insuperable bar to the future happiness of a couple, there ought to be more people applying for divorces even than there are.

There has been probably more nonsense written by writers of fiction—let alone the poets, notorious high-priests of the imposture—upon the subject of ante-nuptial love, than upon all others put together. 'Falling in love,' 'love at first sight,' and similar phrases, which might just as well be applied to a bunch of grapes or a bottle of beer, as to a young gentleman or lady, are invested with mysterious and almost divine attributes; while the Beloved Object upon whom the other's eyes have only once been set perhaps, is made to push from their places in the male or female heart its tried and dearest friends. We deeply sympathise with Mr Charles Lamb in this matter, and believe the grievance to be of the most outrageous character. We wonder whether, in the neighbourhood of the Salt Lake, the same change comes over the male Mormon previous to each 'annexation' of a wife, or whether it is an evil peculiar to monogamists. When a couple have been married a little time, it is reasonable enough, indeed, that the wife—who has become partner, lover, sympathiser, house-manager, companion, guide (but rarely philosopher),

and friend, in one—should fill the foremost and highest place in the thoughts and affections of the husband; but when in the untried and chrysalis state of 'engaged young woman,' we do think it a very poor return for years of trustful intercourse that we should be so easily and quickly distanced by her in the affections of our friend. They cannot possibly know enough about one another to warrant anything of the sort; the lady especially—and rather luckily for some of us men—being quite unable to make inquiry into 'dearest Robert's' antecedents. Indeed, persons alter so much when bearing the matrimonial yoke together, from what they were when going in single harness, that antecedents are of no great consequence; and herein lay Florence's hope of the Marsdens' wellbeing.

They took a fine house in town, which their fortune justified them in doing, and kept a couple of carriages, which it did not. Mr Onslow Bateman had lodgings of his own, and did not live with them, but he was their welcome and constant guest. His daughter was always pleased to see her father the most polished ornament of their brilliant little assemblies; while Marsden, who grew more and more closely connected with him in business matters, was always glad to hear from his smoothly prophesying lips how the *Vampire* was sucking at that *vile corpus*—on which so many such experiments are made—the Public. His acquaintance lay principally among the contributors of that paper—disciples of the great Pooh-pooh School—who hailed the accession to their ranks of one so full of strange adventure and unconventional ideas. The conversation of these gentlemen was brilliant and bitter; that of Mr Onslow Bateman was graceful and polite; that of Robert Marsden vivacious and outspoken. Ellen imagined that she was entertaining the most charming company in London. When Sir Charles and Lady Ryder came to stay with them after the double marriage, the younger sister had promised to herself some little triumphant pleasure in shewing Florence that although she herself had no pretensions to cleverness, she at least could offer her society in Belgrave Street that was worthy of the authoress of *Anne Chisholm*. This proposed gratification did not, however, come off as she expected. If the company had had amongst them but one poor half-pennyworth of enthusiasm in favour of any one thing, Florence might have got on with them well enough, for she could be pyrotechnical and witty herself when she felt at ease, besides being beautiful enough to attract a whole tribe of young philosophers. But want of earnestness is in the eyes of an earnest-hearted young woman the unforgivable sin; she would almost rather have you laugh at her than at her pet theories. Florence thought the men she met at the Marsdens a mere glib, godless set of Merry-Andrews, and expressed as much to her husband when they retired together on the night of poor Ellen's first reception.

'Now, don't you think so, Charles?' she added coaxingly; for she valued her husband's opinion upon all subjects, and would always rather have had it upon her side than an act of parliament.

'Really, my dear,' replied he laughing, 'your intuition is so much better than most people's experience, or I should have said that we had hardly seen enough of'—

Here she managed to stop his mouth with her rose-leaf of a hand, and interrupted him coaxingly, with: 'You don't like them *yourself* now, Charley, dear? Come, tell me.'

'No, I do not, my love,' returned her husband seriously.

Whereupon Florence kissed him approvingly.

They were a happy pair, those two, and understood and appreciated one another thoroughly. It is a mere wicked bachelor-scandal to say that they must have quarrelled now and then like other married folks. They never did anything of the sort. What is the use of any quarrel whose termination is certain beforehand

—predestinated? Sir Charles Ryder, although he had a literary wife, was undisputed master in his own household. Even when the children came—who should ever climb around the parent stems, and entwine them together in new bonds of love, but who sometimes made a separating tendency—there were no disputes, no favouritisms. Rudealeigh was indeed a happy home.

The Marsdens—it was afterwards said 'luckily'—had no children who—although such a bond was not necessary to attach Ellen to her husband—might otherwise have done much to domesticate Robert. There is no man commonly more devoted to his young children than the harem-scarem, wild-oats-sowing father, who has once been tamed. Marsden felt no want of them, as a man may not feel the want of a remedy without which he will nevertheless die; nor was he indeed, as it was, what could be called, with any charity, a bad husband. If there be three classes of husbands, as of everything else—the good, the bad, and the indifferent—he rather, in the eyes of the world, belonged to the last class, while in his wife's eyes, which was, after all, the more important matter, he still belonged to the first. It is our private belief, too, that he would have always remained so, so long as the barometer of his fortunes stood at 'Fair.' One morning, however, several years after their marriage, an incident occurred which brought down the index-hand at once to 'Very Stormy.' A cheque of his for a considerable sum was dishonoured. Marsden was very unacquainted with business matters, and did not know the full and direful meaning of this occurrence. His fortune—much reduced from its original value in Spanish doubloons, by the time he had got to England—was still large, as he believed, and had been invested by his father-in-law in different safe concerns; but Mr Onslow Bateman had the power of using his name in connection with the *Vampire* to a quite unlimited extent. He himself had, without knowing it, overdrawn his account largely at the banker's; and his father-in-law, without telling it, had involved him to a fearful amount with the newspaper. Mr Onslow Bateman did not mean to act dishonestly, but he had not had the courage to confess the continuous and total failure of the speculation of which he had so often boasted, and out of which besides he himself, as manager, made a comfortable income. For years the *Vampire* had been kept alive solely by Robert Marsden's credit. Robert's banker knew it, his friends knew it, his enemies knew it well, but the young man himself only knew that a little more effort had had to be made, and that a little more money had been required—after each of which galvanic shocks he had been assured that the *Vampire* had been resuscitated, and was again doing well. In total ignorance of the extent of his calamity, but not without suspicion of the cause of it, he took his way to the lodgings of Mr Onslow Bateman in Halfmoon Street. That gentleman was in the back drawing-room, which had been fitted up as his study, with newspapers about him enough to have covered him knee-deep, arranged neatly in solid piles, and with business-looking documents and letters docketed or under weights in heaps upon the table, as though the whole place had been sacred to Method, while Mr Bateman himself might have sat for a very respectable allegory of Commercial Security.

'Look here,' exclaimed Marsden sternly, as he threw down the dishonoured cheque, 'will you, who are such an excellent man of business, tell me how much that is worth?'

'Four hundred and fifteen pounds,' replied Mr Bateman quietly, but turning exceedingly pale nevertheless. 'I am sorry you are drawing so much out of the Bank at present, for we were just now wanting a little, and I did not wish to touch your investments.'

'You need not disturb yourself on that account,

sir,' observed Marsden bitterly; 'that cheque is dishonoured.'

'Dishonoured, is it?' said his father-in-law, raising his eyebrows, as if that were a curious and interesting circumstance too. 'There must be some mistake; we will see to that this afternoon.'

'At once, if you please, Mr Bateman: without one moment's delay. I have deferred long enough to look after my own affairs, it seems.'

'My dear Marsden,' returned the other reproachfully, 'you must know how much you have in your banker's hands. I could not have drawn out money without your consent. You have given me several cheques lately.'

'I know I have,' remarked Marsden impatiently; 'I have given you a great deal too many.'

'Well, then, of course you know what your own expenses have been; heavy, I do not doubt, heavier than I could have wished them to have been, perhaps, but it was not for me to interfere, you know. The meddling of a father-in-law or a mother-in-law in such matters—and this is really worth remembering, my dear Marsden, in future life—is one of the most dangerous trials to domestic unity that can possibly be hazarded.'

The ex-tutor had by this time quite recovered himself, and delivered the above sentiment in his accustomed philosophic and mental tone. 'Moreover, my dear Marsden, I feel confident that the *Vampire* will eventually'—

'That paper shall never have one shilling more of my money,' interrupted the young man savagely; 'I will withdraw my name from the whole concern.'

'That would be downright ruin,' observed Mr Bateman mechanically.

'Ruin!' echoed Marsden furiously; 'what do you mean, sir? To whom will it be ruin? Speak out, sir; I will be no longer trifled with!'

'Ruin to the paper itself, of course I mean. Did I say "ruin"?''

'You did, sir; and I cannot but believe you meant—I know not what. Now, listen. Will you, or will you not, tell me now, this instant, and once for all, how much I am liable for? None of your honeyed speeches, Mr Bateman, for I mistrust them; tell me the worst.'

'You have forgotten yourself, Marsden,' returned Mr Onslow Bateman reddening; 'I cannot: while you are in your present state of mind, it is quite impossible. Matters of business are not to be settled in a moment. No, sir, I will not.'

'Then, Mr Onslow Bateman, I will fetch some one here who will make you do so.'

Robert Marsden left the room as he said those words, and Mr Bateman's ghastly smile and show of incredulity were thrown away upon the looking-glass opposite to him. They looked so very unlike the things he had intended them to be—what was reflected there was altogether so different from the cautious and agreeable features which it generally mirrored—that he got up as if to look into the metamorphosis. He walked with difficulty, and before he had crossed the room, a knock at the door sent him staggering back to his writing-chair. The headstrong, foolish lad would surely never have come back with a—'with a policeman! No. He would in that case scarcely have knocked. It was only a message-boy from the *Vampire* office, with a note marked *private*, and very carefully sealed. Mr Onslow Bateman opened it, read it, and bade the servant say that there was no answer. It consisted of only a single line, but he seemed either to be unable to make himself master of its meaning, or to be paralysed by the intelligence it conveyed: 'R. has gone to Belgrave St.' That was all. He sat and stared at it, as though he expected some chemical writing of a more assuring character would presently make itself apparent. Then, leaning his head on his right hand, which shut out the door from his vision,

he sat at his desk, motionless, waiting for the house-bell to ring again. At last it did ring, and he heard Marsden's voice in the passage speaking hoarsely. He also recognised another foot-fall on the stairs, at which his white face grew more ghastly still. The room-door was opened, and admitted those two persons; but he did not look up at them, and shaded his eyes with his delicate white fingers as before.

'Do not go near that man, if you wish to call me husband!' exclaimed Marsden sternly, and laying his hand upon his wife's arm. 'He has made beggars of you and me. I went for you, that you, his daughter, should entreat him to tell you to what extent he had been robbing his own flesh and blood. I now bring you to look upon him for the last time, for you must make your choice henceforth between him and me. When I reached home, sir, I found your printer, Richards, who having been fobbed off long enough by your repeated promises, by your specious falsehoods of what I would do for you and for this precious property, declined to trust me any more. To trust me, mark you, who never knew I owed him sixpence. You must have been a clever rogue—be silent, woman, I tell you there is no greater swindler than you fellow alive!—a clever plausible rogue to get much credit from a man like that. He would put me into prison to-morrow, look you! Seven-and-thirty thousand pounds or so, is, it seems, the account for which I am made liable. Three years of rather costly journalism, even if this Richards did, as he says, pay for everything upon the speculation of your having so weak and wealthy a son-in-law—you have now small reason to boast any more of that, I reckon. Certainly costly, I repeat, since this debt is independent of my pretty frequent bleedings at your persuasive hands. You need not trouble yourself to finish that article, sir, for the paper is dead. It is a pity, for I do not doubt there is an exceedingly high moral tone in it. I believe we have now—this lady, your daughter, and myself—when all shall be paid, about one thousand pounds to live upon. Shall I advance anything more to you for some other highly promising venture? Pray, command me, sir, to the extent of my humble means. You do not speak; and certainly silence becomes you best, Mr Bateman. Have you any last words, Ellen, to address to this man? I have quite finished with him.'

'Father,' exclaimed Mrs Marsden tremulously; 'you see I have no choice in this matter. I have sworn to cleave to Robert and forsake all others for him. I do not understand the nature of the wrong you have done him, and I do not wish to do so. If we had been a little more open to one another, father, if you would have suffered Florence and myself to have been nearer to you when we were girls—I do not now say it, Heaven knows, in the way of reproach—I think this dreadful misfortune would not, could not, have happened to us. I telegraphed to dearest Florence before I left home, and she will be here to-morrow at latest to cheer you, to comfort you, as she only can. I would gladly do so myself—for Robert would permit me, yet, for all he has said—but I never had the power, never. Will you kiss me, father?' She advanced a step or two towards him, but presently ran back to her husband screaming: 'Look, Robert, look in the glass yonder! Papa is dying! O horror—my father is dead!'

And indeed it was even as she said.

Sitting at his desk, with one hand supporting his head, and the other within his waistcoat, pressed against his heart, as if some dreadful pang had called it thither, Mr Onslow Bateman had expired, though at what point of that dread interview it was now impossible to say.

Sir Charles and Lady Ryder arrived in Belgrave Street as fast as steam and horse-power could bring them; and the baronet attended Mr Onslow Bateman's funeral as chief mourner. Marsden could by no

means be induced to be present, or even to wear so much as a hat-band in respect for the departed. The dead man had left behind him no other enemy—for he had never spoken ill (whatever he might have written) of any creature—and a considerable number of persons, who would certainly 'miss' him in a sense quite equal to the conventional meaning of the expression, followed him to the grave. His two daughters, whom he had wronged most deeply, sat at home weeping bitterly for him from whom they had at least never experienced a harshness. Florence named her second boy after him, and ever held his memory dear and in tenderness.

There were other matters affecting the Marsdens just then more pressingly than the dead. There was indeed now nothing beyond the thousand pounds which Robert had calculated upon left out of all that treasure from the banks of the Magdalena. If it had not been for Ryder, poverty would have come upon him in bitterest guise, for Marsden was growing reckless, and something more than cold to his poor wife at home. The young baronet, who took little interest in politics, but whose support was of some value to the member for his division of the county, applied to him for a situation for his friend. Government-post he had none to give him, but there was a certain actuaryship procured through his good offices for the ruined man, Sir Charles becoming Marsden's security to the extent of two thousand pounds. The income was a very fair one, and for some time its recipient evinced a proportionable change for the better, for Robert Marsden's respectability ever fluctuated directly as his revenue. Of course, the house in Belgrave Street and the two carriages were no longer possible; but a very 'desirable residence' was procured elsewhere; the little dinner-parties were resumed, and matters were managed generally in a fashion which was something more than comfortable. After a little, even this was not sufficient; Marsden seemed unable to separate himself from his recent position, and began to fill his brother-in-law's mind with much misgiving. The baronet, upon becoming his security, had protected poor Ellen as well as he could, by compelling Marsden to insure his life for her benefit to the extent of five thousand pounds; and he could not forbear, on one occasion—when speaking of the premium yearly due upon the sum in question—from remonstrating with him upon his profuse expenditure.

'My dear Marsden,' observed he good-naturedly, when he was staying alone a couple of days with the actuary and his wife, in town, 'you must either be an excellent manager, or else a very extravagant fellow, for I never saw six hundred a year go half so far.'

'My dear sir,' returned the other gravely, 'I am quite aware that I am under considerable obligations to you; but unless I request you to lend me money, you have no sort of right to inquire into my private concerns.' And he presently left the room in something of a huff.

Mrs Marsden, whose custom it by no means was to speak upon business matters, then looked up with tearful eyes from the book which she had been pretending to read by the fireside, and said: 'Indeed, Sir Charles, there is something very wrong in our affairs, I know, for my dear husband is so changed.'

'I hope not—I sincerely trust not, Mrs Marsden; but "if any misfortune should ever chance to happen, remember"—these were Florence's last words to me ere I left home—"tell my dearest sister to come down to Rudesleigh at once, and stop there."'

'Why, what do you fear that should separate Robert and me?' cried Ellen with agitation. 'What have you heard about us?'

'Nothing, my dear Mrs Marsden; I have heard nothing; but when I see with my own eyes a man



living at five times the rate justified by his income, I am sure the end cannot be very far off.'

'And yet, do you know,' said she, dropping her voice to a whisper, 'that we pay ready money for almost everything?'

'Indeed, I did not,' replied the baronet drily; 'and if so, I do not wonder at Marsden's considering my interference an impertinence.' And as he looked upon the yet young wife's flushed cheeks and downcast eyes, he groaned to think that a creature once so guileless, should have so soon been taught to tell so obvious and audacious a lie.

It was but a short time after this that Marsden left town for several days without telling Ellen whither he was going. He had never done such a thing before, and it pained her deeply, as the coldest, most unhusbandlike action of his married life; she had but few female friends in London, and was always lonely in his absence, with nothing to cheer her—as she had often told him, too—but the picturing to herself what her dear Robert was doing when away. He himself seemed, by a certain alteration in his behaviour, to feel that he had behaved cruelly, when he returned, so that she took courage to ask him—having heard from her maid, who had heard it from his valet, where he had been—what had taken him to Cumberland. He did not answer, but looked into her face with what he meant to have been a cold indifference, but which changed into an expression of penitent anguish, that in after-years she never forgot. 'Are, then, the places where you knew me first still dear to you, Robert? I know you went to see them on your road to Rudesleigh, when you came home; but now—I had almost thought, dear Robert, that you cared neither for them nor me.' Her tears fell fast as he kissed her forehead with lips as cold as a stone.

'I told you once, Ellen, I was not worthy of you, and I told you the truth. Never shed tear for me now, girl, nor henceforth, I beseech you; for it would be far better for you that I were dead than alive.'

The miserable hours the poor girl spent that night were nothing to the horrors of the morning, when she learned in his own handwriting that Robert Marsden had left her for ever, an exile and an outlaw. He had taken advantage of his situation as actuary to falsify the accounts of his employers, and so secure for himself many thousand pounds. Felon as he was, he knew she would not have ceased from seeking him, had he not added that he did not wish to behold her face again; that she was to think of him as dead, and to be thankful.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### THE REST OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

Mrs Marsden was received in her great grief at Rudesleigh Manor with sympathising affection and reverent tenderness. Even her old enemy, little Miss Ryder—whose home was at the manor-house now no less than it had been when Sir Charles was a bachelor—softened towards the worse than widowed young woman, and endeavoured to initiate her into the mysteries of her favourite pursuit of knitting, as being one of the most excellent specifics for an inward bruise or heart-sorrow. Her misfortune was so infinitely more dire than anything which could possibly have been foreseen, that no sort of comfort could be offered except that wretched one of matters being now at their very worst. Ryder indeed thought no disgrace ought to be weighed against the advantage of Ellen's being freed for ever from the life-companionship of such a scoundrel as Robert had proved to be. He paid his surety-money for him without a murmur, and would have paid—if by that means he could have wiped out the stain that clung to the poor wife—the enormous losses incurred by his

wholesale falsifications as well; but that was impossible, since Robert Marsden's name was already in the *Hue and Cry*, with the promise of a reward for his apprehension, and Robert Marsden's delinquencies the subject of conversation from drawing-room to street-corner. But what Ryder was most enraged about against his brother-in-law was the fact, that the policy for five thousand pounds was missing, which he had compelled him to procure for the sake of his wife. His failing to leave that document was, in the baronet's eyes, a more base and scoundrel-like action than all the rest, and he had secretly determined that in case of Marsden's arrest, he would not advance a single shilling for his legal defence until that deed was placed in his own possession.

There seemed, however, but little probability of any such opportunity occurring, since after many months' careful search, the police found themselves totally at fault, and gave up the pursuit of the offender, notwithstanding that the large sums he was supposed to have carried away with him whetted their curiosity not a little. One enthusiastic detective absolutely paid a visit to Marycross, and dug perseveringly for nuggets—and information—for a fortnight; and another, as we have heard, lived for several weeks in a patent tent, by the trunk of a Tamarind-tree that lay on the right bank of the Magdalena River. Ellen could never be induced, as some of her friends entreated her, to resume her maiden name; but she became more like what one might imagine Miss Ryder to have been in her youth—after the 'disappointment' at which she sometimes hinted—than would be thought possible. Her impetuous spirits were gone, indeed, for ever, and her beauty, without departing, seemed to have altogether changed its character, but she was cheerful and even chatty upon all subjects save the one she thought of most; and when great Aunt Ryder was exhausted with carrying her little nephews pick-a-back, Aunt Ellen was always willing to become a 'gee-gee' or riding-horse in her place, although certainly one of no very prancing and fiery temperament.

Notwithstanding that so many female relatives are living together at Rudesleigh, years have now rolled on without sign of anything approaching to a disagreement. The two sisters love one another as dearly as they ever did when we knew them at Teesdale How. The Bateman Household proper is indeed narrowed in its limits, but the Ryder branch of it continues to increase with periodical punctuality. Where love and good sense dwell together, matters are sure to go on pretty smoothly, and there is seldom much for the poor tale-writer to glean in such a field. An incident, however, in addition to the customary appearance of another little Ryder, happened within this last twelvemonth, which, having a decided bearing upon our story, may fitly conclude it.

The two sons of the same county member through whose influence Marsden had obtained his actuaryship chanced to be staying at Rudesleigh Manor with their friend, the eldest—but still not very old—Master Ryder. They went to a school in Leicestershire, a long way off, and therefore possessed a vast superiority in the eyes of that young gentleman, who was at present only under domestic tutelage. He suffered them to roam over the house with the graceful hospitality peculiar to his period of life, following in their wake, and listening reverently to the encomiums or censures which they freely passed upon all that met their gaze. Even the little boudoir—the same wherein our dear Florence wrote her *Anne Chisholm* long ago, but now sacred to Aunt Ellen—was profaned by their unhallowed feet—and hands. They poked about the rosewood escritoire, and discovered to their great delight that, by tilting it suddenly and sharply, the whole of the little tinkling drawers would tumble out at once. In one of these was a miniature, by no means

intended for the public eye, which they instantly pounced upon and investigated.

'Why, it's Harry Forester, dashed if it isn't,' cried the elder of the two bandits; 'only he ain't got no beard now, nor yet a moustache.'

'So it is,' assented the other. 'Here's a precious lark. Hooray!'

'Hush!' exclaimed little Ryder; 'you're both wrong, you are. That's my uncle, whom we don't say nothing about. Aunt Ellen wouldn't like it, if she knew you had seen it.'

'I tell you it's Forester, small boy; everybody knows Harry Forester. Bother your Aunt Ellen!'

'Don't you say any ill of her, now,' cried the young gentleman, reddening, 'because I won't stand it. I'll punch your head first—either of your heads—so there.'

Sir Charles Ryder happened to be passing the boudoir-door when this angry altercation was waxing very loud indeed, and he begged to inquire the cause of it.

'Why, here,' explained the elder visitor; 'Charley says this is not Harry Forester, the man that hunts with our hounds in Leicestershire: at least they ain't our hounds, you know, only we get ponies lent us sometimes on Saturdays. He says it's his uncle. Fancy Forester being his uncle! Then Mrs Forester must be his aunt, and all the little Foresters his first-cousins, I suppose. O my, what a go!'

'No, Charley,' observed his father gravely, 'you are wrong this time, although you were right enough to take your Aunt Ellen's part. You never saw your uncle, you know, and therefore cannot possibly tell for certain that this is indeed his portrait. I know Harry Forester, and, as you say, boys, this must have been he before he shaved.'

And so the miniature went back to the escritoire.

By the next night, Sir Charles was in Leicestershire, and had no difficulty in finding out the gentleman who hunted so regularly with the Dycheley hounds. He came upon him in the morning as he stood, in scarlet, at the door of a comfortable residence, about to mount his justly celebrated bay-horse Swindler by Scamp. There was a handsome woman looking out of one of the upper windows, who drew her head in rapidly as the baronet drew near. A couple of pretty children were swinging on the little garden-gate, and the whole scene was redolent of comfort and the pleasures of the country. The bronzed but whiskerless face of Mr Henry Forester, however, took a very pallid and unhealthy hue, for so persevering a pursuer of the delights of the chase, when his eyes met those of the visitor. He left the horse with his groom, and came forward out of earshot of the rest to meet him.

'Are you come down here to send me to the hulks?' inquired Robert Marsden hoarsely.

'That depends upon yourself, sir,' returned Ryder sternly, but far from bitterly. 'As I am a living man, I will do so, unless I get that policy of yours for five thousand pounds. I do not let you out of sight until I hold it in my hands.'

He followed Marsden into the dwelling-house and upstairs, where he again got sight of the woman's face, which he seemed to remember dimly to have seen elsewhere. The policy was handed over to him.

'Have you paid the premiums up to this date, sir? Good. Since it cannot hurt you to do so in this world, and must needs benefit you, as at least one act of justice done, in that which is to come, will you leave written directions that proof of your demise, when that shall take place, may be forwarded to'—he could not bring himself to mention Ellen's name—'to Rudesleigh?'

'I will,' said Marsden solemnly.

As there had been no greeting when they met, so there was no God-be-with-you when they parted. So far sundered were those two 'that had been friends in youth.'

The woman's face haunted Ryder's memory throughout his return-journey, and while he was telling Florence how he had sped upon his strange errand.

'Was she rather ruddy and stout?' inquired she.

'Yes. But how did you know that? I would give five pounds to recollect that woman's name.'

'I only guess,' replied Florence sadly. 'I never could understand why Marsden retained such an attachment to Cumberland. But, if she be Phoebe Rothwaite, now I can.'

'Yes, Phoebe, that is she without doubt,' exclaimed Ryder: 'but we must never tell poor Ellen this.'

'Never,' replied Florence—'never, husband; for that would be harder to bear than all the rest.'

THE END OF THE BATEMAN HOUSEHOLD.

## MORE CELESTIAL INTELLIGENCE.

How is it that, after so many explorations of Cathay, and almost as many books as explorers, we seem to know nothing certain concerning the Chinese and their character? Nay, we are in some respects even worse off than in the days when our information was drawn exclusively from the Willow Pattern Plates in every dwelling-house; for although less extensive and practical, that was at least consistent and uniform. Now, no sooner have we perused a volume, setting forth with elaborate precision the manners, customs, politics, and theology of this abstruse people, than another is published, reversing all its judgments, and leading us to quite opposite conclusions. Nothing seems universally agreed upon except that the Chinese wear pig-tails—a fact of which we were already in possession from the Plates aforesaid. From Mr John Scarth, a resident in the Celestial Empire of twelve years' standing, comes the last, and certainly not the least interesting of these contributions,\* which being, we believe, the only one that has been written by a mercantile person in relation to this subject, has a peculiar significance.

'Most of the books upon China,' says he, 'have been written by men of official position—by missionaries, and by persons who have seen but little of the natives in daily general intercourse: the official stands upon his dignity, and goes through the tedious forms of stiff diplomatic visits now and then; most of his information is derived from people who are devoted to the mandarins; the missionary has better opportunities, mixes more with the people, and his informants are less connected with the ruling authorities, but, from his position, he sees the Chinese in a different light to most other observers.' Mr Scarth, for his part, went to work in a very different manner. 'My object being to see the country as well as could be without interruption, and to penetrate as far as possible into the silk-districts; I adopted the Chinese dress, and after getting fairly under-way, metamorphosed myself into a Chinaman; set the barber to work to make a clean sweep of my hair; and, attached to my cap, wore a thorough-bred tail of some son of Han; shaded the natural colour of my barbarian eyes by a huge pair of tea-stone spectacles; and marched forth without fear of recognition.' Thus equipped, he made his tour, and very wisely devotes his powers of description to the people rather than to the towns, suffering his readers to draw their own conclusions from his facts, without making profound reflections upon each individual incident—those generalisations

\* *Twelve Years in China.* Thomas Constable & Co., Edinburgh.

from insufficient data, which are the rocks on which so many a didactic traveller goes to wreck.

The intellectual virtues of the Chinese are far from high, being confined in theory to the study of certain unusually turbid metaphysics among their students, and in practice, to little more than ingenuities. In this latter respect, they remind one of a more civilised nation separated from us by a narrower sea. They do not consider any pursuit so frivolous as to be denied the best advantages of science—not even the flying of paper-kites. 'It is strange to see sober, sedate merchants tugging away at a long string, guiding a kite very effectually in the air. Some are made in the shape of birds; and the hovering of the kestrel, or the quick dive of the sparrow-hawk, is beautifully imitated by expert guidance of the string. The first I saw in Shanghai appeared so real that I got down a rifle to try a shot, but was told it was only a kite. "To be sure it is; why not have a shot at it?" and it was some time till I understood it was a *paper*, not the *bird* kite. The Chinese beat us hollow in these things, especially in the "messengers" that they send spinning up the string. They send up prettily painted gigantic butterflies with outspread wings, at the back of which is a simple contrivance to make them collapse when the butterfly reaches the kite, and as soon as they collapse, down comes the butterfly, sliding along the string, ready to be adjusted for another flight.' Even their peripatetic theatres are provided with quite magnificent dresses and 'properties' that would put our Richardsons to the blush, while their acting is elaborately good, the attitudes of the performers being studied even to the positions of their fingers. The heroines of the Chinese drama are men who 'make up' well enough for the parts they have to play, only it is not fair to watch them from behind the curtain, as our author did. 'In one furious scene, where the heroine had been going through a terrific piece of fierce declamation, in a high falsetto, she threw herself (or rather himself), in the height of injured innocence, into a chair, and hiding her face from the spectators, as if in the deepest grief, quietly expelled her quid, invisibly to them, but bringing the sublime too near to the ridiculous as seen from our side of the house.' It is rare, indeed, however, to find Celestial ingenuity turned to such serious and practical account as in the following devices of the rebels when besieged at Shanghai. 'Round the city-walls, and in front of other defences, there were pitfalls, some very large, and at the bottom a plentiful crop of sharp-pointed bamboo spikes. The ditches surrounding the imperial camps were similarly provided, making an admirable defence, when the sandal-like shoes of the fighting-men are taken into account, and promised a horrible death to any one that fell into them. The worst kind consisted of small holes, about a foot in diameter, in which the spikes were placed on the sides, with the points slanting inwards towards the bottom, so that any one who "put his foot in it" was regularly entrapped. But the most ingenious defence was made use of in the houses that formed the inner line of defence; they were loopholed, and the exterior whitewashed: over each loophole there was a sheet of white paper pendant on the outside, so that a musket could be pushed through, and aim taken; but when it was withdrawn, the similarity of the paper to the colour of the wall prevented any loophole from being seen, so that no return-shot from small firearms need be feared. . . . Regarding rifle-balls, the rebels stated a curious circumstance. As a protection against them, they wore dresses thickly padded with floss silk: they said that while the ball had a twist in it, revolving in its course, it caught up the silk, and fastened itself in the garment. One man told me that he took out six so caught, in one day, after a severe fight. The experiment might

be worth trying. They said the dress was of more use within a hundred yards than at long-range, when the ball had lost its revolving motion.'

Little of this crafty dexterity was, be it observed, to be found in the ranks of the Imperialists; and generally, we learn throughout this volume, that wherever mandarin authority prevails, there is dullness and barbarism, and where the people are more left to themselves, intelligence and quiet. 'An ordinary Chinese,' says M. Callery, of the French legation, 'lies often; a mandarin *always* lies.' The wholesale extortion of these so-called magistrates is almost beyond belief. When Ho-kwan (who ought to have been called Ho-fie) was degraded, he is said to have had twenty-seven millions in gems and bullion in his treasury. When He-gan was sent to retrieve the losses of Le, governor-general of Kwang-tung, who had been defeated by certain rebels, he did not go with soldiers, but with money, and bought them off with three hundred thousand pounds. Not a single mandarin, since the late Rebellion began, was ever opposed to the enemy without his subsequent degradation. The first success of it was entirely owing to the consummate deceit and corruption of the mandarins, who pocketed the pay of an army which only consisted of mock muster-rolls. The reports which the generals sent to Peking were far more lying than Falstaff's version of his combat at Gadshill. The viceroy of Pih-che-lo exterminated all the rebels several times, according to the official gazette; and when he was sent to retake Ching-kiang-foo, he was of course successful; but 'on account of the narrowness of the streets, the general thought it more prudent to encamp outside the barrier.' This happened in July 1853, and the rebels held the town for four years afterwards. A Chinese battle—among themselves—seems to be as good as a farce, and not very much more dangerous. 'Some of the little fights at Shanghai were very amusing. One day, when a great many soldiers were out, I saw more of the combat than was pleasant. Having got into the line of fire, I was forced to take shelter behind a grave, the bullets striking the grave from each side every second. Why they came my way, it was difficult to discover, for they ought to have passed on the other side of a creek, about twenty yards distant, to the people they were intended for; but to see the dodging of the soldiers, then of the rebels, each trying to evade the other, was almost amusing. One fellow, ready primed and loaded, would rush up the side of a grave-hillock, drop his matchlock over the top, and without taking aim, blaze away. There is no ramrod required for the shot they use, the bullet or bar of iron is merely dropped in loose upon the powder. There was a fine scene on an occasion when the Shanghai rebels made a sortie; one of the men was cut off by an imperial skirmisher, who had his piece loaded. The rebel had no time to charge his, so he ran round and round a grave, which was high enough to keep his enemy from shooting him when on the opposite side. Hare-hunting is nothing to it: Redcap described hosts of circles, and the royalist was fast getting blown, when the gods took pity on his wind, for, by some unlucky chance, the rebel tripped and fell! The soldier was at him in a moment, and to make sure of his prize, put the muzzle of his matchlock to Redcap's head, fired, and took to his heels as fast as he could go. It is difficult to say who was most astonished when Mr Redcap died exactly the same. The bullet that dropped down readily on the powder, fell out as easily when the barrel was depressed. The rebel got off with a good singeing of his long hair.'

The real slaughters committed by the Imperialists always took place after the fighting-men of the rebels had evacuated a town, and the women, and children, and innocent inhabitants were left in their power; while the mandarins exhibited their intelligence and courage in devising cruel torments. With such an



example before them, it is no wonder that the Chinese are a cruel race. The horrors of their prisons are so great, that the contentment with which criminals meet their death is not to be wondered at. 'In Shanghai, I have seen prisoners crammed like wild beasts in a cage, rolling about in the midst of filth and disease, begging for food. In the depth of winter, prisoners are chained to each other in strings, one of them not unfrequently hanging dead to his comrades! Once a party of pirates were seized and landed near the foreign houses; there had been a deficiency of chains, so the poor wretches were joined together with a large nail clenched through the hand of each! At Foochow, I met a prisoner whom they were carrying into the city in a cage barely large enough to contain his body, cramped up in a sitting posture; two of the bars at the top had been cut to allow his head to pass through, every jostle or stop in the movement of his bearers causing his neck or face to be dashed against the broken bars. It is in the recollection of Canton residents when four men were placed in the *cangue* with a guard around them, and publicly starved to death in the open streets!'

At Amoy, Captain Fishbourne, who was present when the rebel army had got away, informs us that 'the mandarins set the pirates that were *in government* pay to kill all the people they could, giving them six dollars a head, innocent or guilty. It fills one with indignation to find himself working hand-in-hand with officers of such a government. Why, they actually begged assistance to prevent their own rascally hired pirates from attacking them after the rebels had gone!'

The mandarins buy their rank, and when it is obtained, issue in their turn blank receipts for the holding of certain minor offices which are bought of them. 'For instance, a button of mandarin rank, that cost at one time 10,000 dollars, is now procurable for about 2500. The rich man who pays this 2500 dollars, anxious to get part of his money back, sells his blank receipts for from 400 to 1000 dollars, to a man desirous of the rank, and just fills in his name; he pays his respects to the mandarins, receipt in hand, and is a blue-buttoned dignitary without further trouble, so that a rank which formerly cost 10,000 dollars, is now procurable for a mere percentage of that sum. When Shanghai was besieged, Kei-hang-ah, general in command, once asked the chief native merchants to a grand entertainment; the excuses were numerous, as it was known to be a meeting for the sale of buttons, and likely to prove a dear dinner.'

According to Mr Searth, we Europeans let slip a golden opportunity when we took the side of the effete and misgoverned Imperialists against the so-called Rebels, who, by comparison with their adversaries, he makes it appear were a civilised and well-conducted set of men. We did not know what we were about in the matter, nor is it likely that we shall know as long as we speak no Chinese, and they no English. The great evil of our position in China consists in our lack of good interpreters. 'Government should offer every inducement to young men, especially military officers, to study the language; even if they only learn a little, it would often prove of incalculable benefit. In fact, it is scarcely fair to enter into any great military operation against China while we have such a small staff of interpreters. There is no saying what the result of active warlike operations may be. Even when we took Canton, it was thought imprudent to attempt to govern it, and by putting the Chinese officers again into power, the chief moral effect of taking the city was lost. The attempt should have been made, even if all the Chinese had to be driven out. As it was, Chinese plunderers ravaged the city in all directions, and no one could tell who were the rightful owners of property

that was allowed to be taken away. Of course, the foreigners are blamed for all that was lost. No time should be lost in having officers, and even some of the men, taught at least a little Chinese. With steady application, enough to make a man very useful can be learned in six months. Even a few sentences may be of great benefit. Certain classes might be formed for the Canton dialect, others for the mandarin, and high prizes or staff-appointments be given to all who made satisfactory progress. No man-of-war should be without an interpreter. In many expeditions against pirates, I have no doubt numbers of innocent people have been killed, because we are always ready to fight, though often not prepared to speak. To prevent difficulties, it has too often been the custom to burn, kill, and destroy, taking care not to bring back any prisoners. Hong-kong is notoriously badly off for interpreters, and the local government has apparently made no effort to effect any improvement in this respect. Pirate vessels are fitted out in the harbour, plunder sold in the streets; a proper class of interpreters would have prevented this mighty disgrace long ago.'

Solely to our author's acquaintance with the Chinese tongue, an innocent man in our own supreme court at Hong-kong was saved from imprisonment and ruin; while his own preservation from murder by pirates was due to the same accomplishment. A friendly Chinaman warned him of the character of a vessel which was amicably keeping company with his, and on board of which he was about to venture with a present. Presently 'I noticed that the land "yawed" considerably, proving that our helmsman was steering badly, to let the pirate get up to us. I drew a pistol and threatened to shoot him if he didn't steer right, or if he let the other junk get up to us. With the greatest coolness, but with rather insulted dignity, he pointed to the compass as his guide, and told me to watch if he didn't steer due north. True enough he did; but stepping in front of it, and still getting a glimpse of old Friendly, there was no doubt about it; the compass was steady, but the land appeared to yaw from side to side. I snatched up the compass, and, directly below it, in a right line with the ship, discovered a large iron nail, which had nailed the compass with a vengeance! It seems a wonder to this day that I didn't shoot the fellow on the spot! We were in a nest of pirates, and there was no use getting into a rage; so procuring a bowl of rice, and sifting it through my fingers to guard against being nailed again, I placed the compass in it, and kept guard over it to watch the steering. We soon increased our distance, which was lucky, as night was coming on.'

These pirates are very dangerous fellows, and indeed the Chinese seem to be more intelligent, as well as more formidable, afloat than ashore. If they can shoot nothing else, they can shoot rapids, and are, as they need to be in the swift streams of Fokien, most dextrous river-boatmen. It must require no small nerve, even though a plank is placed far out of the stern to act as a powerful rudder, to steer a boat evenly through the gaps, in such a place as Foochow-foo, where the tide runs like a millrace, and has often a drop of several perpendicular feet. The cormorant-fishing is of a very surprising nature. The natives at Foochow stand erect 'on a little raft of bamboos, not over two feet wide, directing their birds and propelling their raft with a long bamboo, in a fierce tideway, with eddies surrounding them, that threaten almost certain death in case of accident. They appear to be wholly intent on the work of their sagacious birds, who dive about in all directions after their prey. But the best place to see the fishing-cormorant is in the clear streams in Che-kiang. It is very pretty to see the birds chasing the fish under the water—the pace they go at is wonderful; and when they are swimming along near a rough stony bottom, it is quite marvellous to see the rapidity with which they crane their necks

from side to side in the crevices of the rocks as they rush through the water. They seem quite proud when they get hold of a good fish, and bear it triumphantly to their master. He generally has a pet bird, and places relative values on each of his flock; for some, less than a dollar is asked. I think the ring placed round the neck of the cormorant by the fishermen is not to prevent their swallowing the fish, but to distinguish the birds belonging to each fisherman; for when several boats have been together, I have noticed that each lot had different marks, and sometimes a boat-load had no rings. They know their masters readily, and rarely make a mistake in taking the fish to a wrong boat. I once got four or five lots sent into the water at once, all together, and the men being told to call back their birds, they returned without a mistake. When in the boat, they are disagreeable, stupid-looking birds, and being fed upon fishes' entrails, have a disgusting smell. When they reach the side of the boat, the men shove a bamboo under them, on which they perch, and are lifted on to the boat. It is only at Foochow that I have seen rafts used by the fishermen. This is strange, because the wood that is used to build the boats elsewhere nearly all comes from that place. The chief native trade of Foochow is in timber; huge rafts are brought down, and are guided under the bridge with surprising cleverness, by very few hands for such cumbersome contrivances.

When the tide is out, the eel-fishers often take the place of those cormorants. They fly along the mud, although it is so soft that another man would sink at once in it. Each has a sort of sledge, the size and shape of a stave of a large cask, in the middle of which is a small railing about eighteen inches high; he has a small basket for his fish, and an adze-shaped spade, with a handle about two feet long. With one foot, or sometimes with one knee upon this sledge, and holding on by the rail, the man propels himself with the other foot, and that at racing speed.

Mr Scarth bears a rather uncommon testimony to the general honesty of the Chinese, which, from one in his position, ought to be valuable. 'Out of a "chop" of some five or six hundred packages of tea bought in Canton, seldom more than 1 per cent. used to be examined throughout. The tea goes to England, the few chests opened being taken as a criterion of the whole, and excepting from accidents on the way, or indifferent care in storage, damaging the tea, the whole proves to have been faithfully packed. . . . Valuable silk piece-goods are sent off in the same way. In Shanghai there is this difference, that the tea and silk are shipped from the foreigner's warehouse; there are often a hundred dirty vagabonds packing perhaps ten thousand or twenty thousand pounds-worth of silk, every pound-weight being worth about a month's wages to the scurvy-looking coolies that are handling it; yet there is rarely false packing or theft.' Since the export of raw silk from Shanghai is annually more than eight millions of pounds-weight to England and France alone, this honesty must be pretty universal, and is really creditable to a people who, when they can't get the rain to stop, put their inattentive gods out in it, to see how they like it. Seriously, the people of China seem to wish to act fairly and in a friendly way with us. 'Cursed and rotten at the core as their country is,' says our author, 'they have the elements within them of a great nation. Their institutions are good, their maxims and moral code unimpeachable; but the whole is neutralised by the deceit, cupidity, and cowardice of their rulers.'

Whether Mr Scarth be right or not in his political conclusions—and he certainly leaves a strong impression upon our minds that he is right—we have to thank him for a very interesting volume, and regret that our narrowing space compels us to shake hands. In China, people don't shake hands, however, but each man shakes his own.

## REMEMBRANCE.

The grass is on thy grave, Mother,  
And mony a year has fled  
Since my heart grew sad and restless  
At the thocht that ye were dead :  
But oh ! I never will forget  
Thy last sad look at me—  
A look that only mother's love  
To mother's een could gie.

This is my birth-night, and unsocht,  
Auld scenes flit o'er my brain ;  
Close round our fire, on creepie-stools,  
Ken'd faces smile again ;  
Ay, tearfu' een, and joyfu' looks,  
Around that fire I see—  
Wee hearts a' thrilled wi' mother's 'tales'  
O' sorrow and o' glee.

Oh ! lowly was my bairnhood's hame,  
And poverty was there ;  
But love shed brightness round the hearth,  
And soothed a mother's care—  
A mother that made hame a spot  
O' sunshine aye to me ;  
And bright within the past it lies  
As moonlight on the sea.

A widow's hearth was thine, Mother,  
Since first thy face I mind ;  
And oh ! what weary toil was thine,  
Our bread and claes to find :  
Ay, weary toil—and hunger whiles,  
That we nae pinch might feel,  
For thy bairns were a' thy riches,  
An' ye lo'ed them—oh, how weel !

Oh ! my heart swells high within me,  
And the tears rin frae my een,  
As thy trials rise before me,  
Now wi' clearer vision seen—  
Trials sair, but never spoken,  
Though they pressed thy body doon—  
Trials ken'd by nane but puir folk,  
And the God that dwells aboon.

But time brings unco changes ;  
And that heart now kens nae pain ;  
And the bairns wha shared its blessings  
Now hae bairnies o' their ain ;  
And are blessed wi' cozie dwellings,  
Where a meal they aye can spare ,  
And the een that fain would see it,  
Now are dimmed for evermair.

The grass is on thy grave, Mother,  
And mony a year has fled  
Since my heart grew sad and restless  
At the thocht that ye were dead :  
But oh ! I never will forget  
Thy last sad look at me—  
A look that only mother's love  
To mother's een could gie.

X.

*A quack work of very low character is at present in the course of being advertised, with the following recommendation attached : 'This admirable book should be in every person's possession.'—CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL, Nov. 1859.*

*We have simply to state, that no such recommendation ever appeared in CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL, and that the book, from all we can hear of it, is one which should be in Nobody's possession.*

EDINBURGH, March 26, 1860.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.